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INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 6124
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 9325
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STATE FOR I/RF, PA/PR/FPC/W, IIP/G/EA, EAP/PD, R/MR,
EAP/J, EAP/P, PM;
USTR FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;
TREASURY FOR OASIA/IMI;
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA;
CP BUTLER OKINAWA FOR AREA FIELD OFFICE;
PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION IRAN/US IMAGE ABROAD - TOKYO

LEAD STORIES: Most Thursday morning papers front-paged Toyota Motor's report Wednesday that its sales for fiscal 2005 were 21.04 trillion yen, up 13.4 percent from the previous year, making it the first Japanese manufacturer to top 20 trillion yen in annual sales.

¶1. "Stronger Diplomacy Needed to Avert Iran Crisis" The business daily Nihon Keizai editorialized (5/11): "International diplomacy is entering an important phase following Iran's defiance of the UN Security Council chairman's statement calling for Tehran to suspend uranium enrichment activities. The international community needs to join hands and exercise stronger diplomacy to clamp down on Iran's nuclear development and prevent new tensions from rising in the Middle East.... Discord among major nations over how to deal with the situation must be avoided. It is imperative that they stand together to make clear to Iran that its nuclear programs will eventually redound to its detriment....

¶2. "Japan needs to realize that the Iranian nuclear crisis presents not a choice between America and oil but rather a critical task that must be accomplished to halt nuclear proliferation.... Iranian President Ahmadinejad sent a letter to President Bush earlier this week. Although the USG has dismissed the letter as bringing nothing new to the nuclear impasse, the fact that it was sent was a new development, as Iran and the US currently have no channels for direct dialogue. Within the US there are growing calls for direct talks with Tehran. Diplomatic moves to create new channels are worth watching."

¶3. "Action More Important Than Public Diplomacy to Improve US Image" An editorial in the liberal Mainichi commented (5/11): "The Bush administration is suffering

from low support. The GAO recently published a report criticizing DOS-initiated public diplomacy as 'lacking strategy.' The grassroots diplomacy the US has conducted in the Muslim world has not produced the results that were expected of it. Public support for President Bush has fallen to around 30 percent. If Mr. Bush continues to be unpopular and loses his influence internationally, it will become harder to rebuild Iraq and to resolve the Iranian nuclear impasse.

¶4. "What should be done to win back support and trust? Now that the GAO report has been published, we hope that the Bush administration will give serious thought to this question, as doing would also serve the interests of US allies, including Japan.... Following 9/11, the Bush administration tapped former advertising executive Charlotte Beers to be under secretary of state for public diplomacy and public affairs. Following Beers' resignation in 2003, the administration named Karen Hughes, a close aide to the president, to the position. Despite this, there are few signs that US public diplomacy has improved."

SCHIEFFER